



Ardee

How to get to Ardee

It is easy to get to Ardee. It's at the crossroads of the N2 and N52. It is about 5 minutes from the M1 motorway, along the N33.



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Additional photos by Joe Neary and Conor McEaney.

Cúchulainn and Ferdia

An epic battle

Ardee has a special place in Irish mythology as the site of the four day battle between Cúchulainn and Ferdia described in the Cattle Raid of Cooley, An Táin Bó Cúailnge. Cúchulainn was the single-combat champion of Ulster; Ferdia, one of the fiercest soldiers of Connacht's Queen Meadhbh (Maeve).

Fighting with magic

Cúchulainn and Ferdia were foster brothers, both trained by the island warrior woman, Scáthach, before they found themselves on opposing sides in battle. They met in single-combat at the fording point on the river and fought furiously with shields, swords and spears.

Cúchulainn finally won, killing Ferdia with the Gae Bolga, a fearsome, magic spear. Heartbroken by his actions, Cúchulainn carried Ferdia across the ford so he could die with honour.



The friendly town full of history and legend



Ardee today

A thriving market town

Ardee is a busy market town, one of County Louth's main towns, along with Dundalk and Drogheda. Set amid a rolling agricultural landscape, it's a great place to explore with thriving local shops and fabulous pubs, inns, cafés and restaurants where you can linger and enjoy a drink and tasty local food.

Creative arts scene

Every November the town celebrates music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with Ardee Baroque. It's a fabulous event that has been running since 2004, with the Irish Baroque Orchestra performing concerts and hosting an ambitious and innovative outreach programme for local schools and community groups.



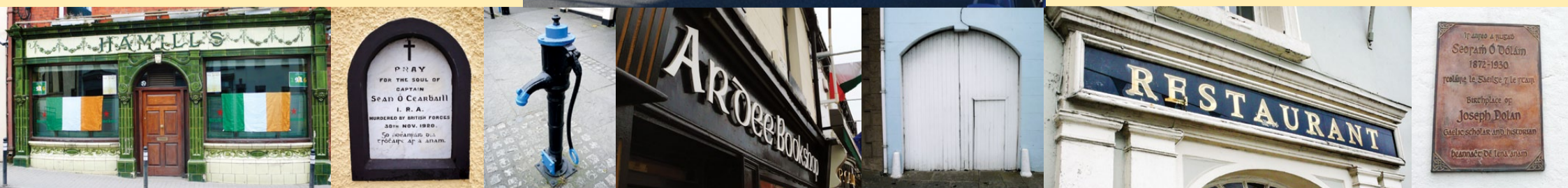
Ardee in history

What's in a name?

Ardee grew at a ford, an important crossing point on the River Dee. It gets its name from the Irish Áth Fhirdhia (the Ford of Ferdia), which has gradually been shortened over time to Atherdee and now to Ardee.

Two castles

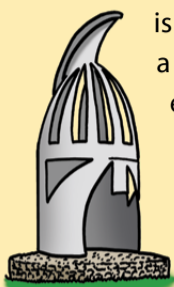
In medieval times, Ardee was at the northern edge of the Pale, the area of Ireland controlled by the English government. Border battles between the Anglo-Normans and the Irish were fierce and frequent along the frontier, leaving a legacy of two castles on Main Street. The Anglo-Norman Gilbert Pipard was the founder of the town of Ardee. Historically Ardee was a walled town and still retains its distinctive wide street flanked by long, narrow properties on each side.



These photos give just a little flavour of what our town has to offer. There are lots more shops, cafés and pubs all waiting to offer you a warm welcome.

Ardee

The **Fallen Helmet** sculpture was created by Micheál McKeown. The Fairgreen is nearby, with a picnic area, exercise equipment and children's play park.

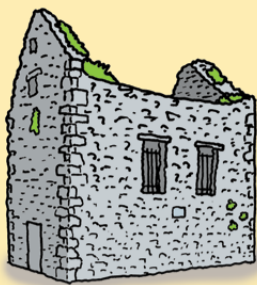


West of the town lies the **Great Bog of Ardee**. This hauntingly beautiful waterlogged landscape is a living carpet of mosses, sedges and heathers. Long important as a source of fuel, Ardee Great Bog is now famous for its wildlife. It is one of the most easterly raised bogs in Ireland.

A **bronze sculpture** commemorates the mythical battle between Cúchulainn and Ferdia. Created by Ann Meldon-Hugh, a sculptor living in Kells, County Meath, the sculpture was commissioned by Louth County Council in 1998. Ann also sculpted Sea God Manannan, which is at Soldiers Point, Dundalk Bay



Enjoy the attractive **Riverside Walk** along the south bank of the River Dee. The river rises in County Cavan and flows through Meath and Louth before joining the River Glyde at the coast at Annagassan.



Chantry College was built as a home for the chaplains of St Mary's Church, sometime before 1487. Chantry chaplains used to chant or celebrate mass for wealthy individuals and families. The chaplains also did some teaching.

Hatch's Castle is a four-storey tower house, built in the 1400s or 1500s. It gets its name from the Hatch family who owned it for a while. In 1837 it was described as being "recently fitted up as a dwelling" by William Hatch.



St Mary's Church of Ireland is built on the site of the original medieval church established by the Normans. A terrible massacre happened here in 1315 when Edward Bruce's soldiers set fire to the church, killing men, women and children who had sought sanctuary from his invading army. The church has been repaired and altered over the centuries. A stone cross, attached to a modern shaft outside the front of the church, is probably Ardee's medieval market cross.



The 7km **Railway Walk** follows the route of the disused Ardee branch line. It closed to passengers in 1934 but freight trains continued until 1975.

Ardee Castle is the largest surviving fortified medieval tower house in Ireland. Built in the 1400s, it has a commanding position, jutting out into the main street and opposite the road to Kells. In the 1700s the building was used as a prison, and more recently was the town's courthouse.



To the **Jumping Church** 1.5km



The octagonal **Church of the Nativity of Our Lady** was built in 1974, nearly opposite the 1829 Catholic Church of St Mary, which it replaced.

A **Jumping Church** is pretty unusual, but tradition says that the wall of Kildemock Church 'jumped' to exclude the remains of an excommunicated man from the sacred enclosure within the church. It happened during a storm in 1715, and the wall that jumped is about 6 metres high and weighs around 40 tonnes....

